

NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL



THE MENOPAUSE.—The *Medical Record* in an abstract of an article in the *Mobile Medical and Surgical Journal* says: "J. L. Ellis finds the matter of the menopause a neglected field of research, and yet probably this epoch in a woman's life is more important than any other. The free action of the emunctories should be carefully maintained throughout this period. The menopause affects the kidneys by checking secretion. It is not yet determined just how this is done. Attention to food products and proper exercise should be given the preference over drugs wherever this is admissible. Milk and buttermilk are good diuretics, and so is water. In regard to the bowels, the writer inclines to the use of cascaria and Epsom salts. The former should be taken regularly in three- or five-grain doses every night, or as often as may be needed. The salts are especially good for overcoming the congestion of the pelvic viscera. Preferable to either, however, is the use of laxative foods and fruits at breakfast. An adequate supply of liquids must not be forgotten. The morbid or peculiar action of the skin is most evident during the menopause, principally in two ways, flushings and sweatings. It is natural enough that the extensive area of cutaneous nerve-endings should share in the common reflex or sympathetic disturbances, so-called, so prevalent at this period. There may be other disturbances, such as eruptions and oedema. During these periods women are usually in a sensitive, nervous state, in a condition of general hyperæsthesia. Excitement is apt to favor flushings and should be avoided. As to treatment of this condition, the general condition of the patient must be considered and everything possible should be done to insure as normal health as can be secured. The bromides are given for excitability. In the case of feeble women the additional benefit of nux vomica or strychnine should be offered. Stimulation of renal activity often cures excessive sweating. Moderate daily exercise, especially in the open air, cold sponge bathing, or sponging the surface with alcohol, or tepid sponge-baths in the very weak, tone up the nervous system, so that sweating due to relaxation soon disappears. The circulation should be good and the respirations deep and frequent. A moderate amount of exercise insures this better than any drug can do under most circumstances. One of the best exercises

for the lungs is singing. Change of life is not a disease. No special disease is peculiar to this period. The key to the treatment, according to the writer, is to remember the hypersensitive state of the reflexes."

RADIUM.—The *New York and Philadelphia Medical Journal*, epitomizing a paper by Dr. Robert Abbe in the *Medical Record*, says: "Abbe has cured common warts, lupus, epithelioma, and sarcoma with radium. He details a number of experiments that have been conducted to determine the action of radium. Two of these experiments may throw some light on its therapeutical action. (1) If seeds are exposed to radium for a few days before planting, they either do not grow or show feeble powers. (2) If meal-worms are exposed to radium, many will die, but those which live on show such retardation, that while those of the control test pass through the cycle of life, becoming beetles, which lay eggs, which grow to worms during the allotted three months, and repeat this cycle three or four generations, the radium worms still remain meal-worms. These two observations may explain why in some cases of malignant disease, apparently cured by radium, microscopy shows in portions of excised tissue the presence of malignant cells. May the explanation be that these cells have been robbed of their vitality like the seeds and worms referred to? In radium emanations we have to deal with a very subtle force, unlike that of Finsen light or Röntgen rays, though strongly resembling them in effect, and efficient in some cases in which these fail. The Becquerel rays given off by radium may be rated as much stronger than Finsen light, as they are weaker than Röntgen rays."

A SIMPLE METHOD OF CATHETER STERILIZATION.—*American Medicine*, quoting from a foreign exchange, the *Centralblatt f. Gynäkol.*, says: "Gusseff for this purpose utilizes a nickel tube twelve millimetres (twelve-twenty-fifths inches) in diameter and twenty-one centimetres (eight and four-tenths inches) in length. Near the one end of the tube two wires run transversely and at right angles to each other; these wires act as a support to the cotton plug, which occludes the lumen of that end of the tube; the plug is introduced from the opposite opening. He uses nickel catheters instead of the glass because of the fragility of the latter. The catheters are placed into the tubes and then the other opening of each tube is closed with another piece of cotton; after this is done the tubes, with the contained catheters, are placed in the autoclave and sterilized under pressure, or they may be sterilized by means of dry heat. When sterile, the tubes with their contents are put away until wanted. In this way ten or twelve sterile catheters may be kept on hand. After they

have been used the catheters are washed, replaced in the tube, and re-sterilized.

YEAST POULTICES.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says in a synopsis of a paper in the *Indiana Medical Journal*: “Kempf reports six cases of sepsis and gangrene in which the yeast poultice was used with satisfaction. His method is as follows: Beer yeast, one quart; corn-meal, finely sifted, one pint; mix and place the mixture near a fire until it rises. Then mix the thin raised dough with about two ounces of finely powdered charcoal. Apply the mixture on a thick cloth directly to the affected part and renew every twenty-four hours. It becomes dry and adheres to the parts but can be removed readily with warm water. This is a most efficient antiseptic poultice for the treatment of gangrene, erysipelas, eczema, ulcers, etc.”

RADIUM IN NERVE THERAPEUTICS.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, quoting from the *Paris Semaine Medicale*, says: “Foveau de Courmelles describes numerous experiences to show the great sedative power possessed by radium. It soothes pain, whether organic or cancerous, nervous or neuralgic. Some cases of facial neuralgia and one of sciatica, long rebellious to other measures, yielded to the action of the radium rays. The girdle pains in two cases of ataxia were cured, one by the radium and the other by the Röntgen rays. The subjects were not informed in regard to the nature of the treatment, so he thinks that suggestion may be excluded.”

BIRCH-LEAVES AS A DIURETIC AND SOLVENT OF RENAL CALCULI.—The *New York and Philadelphia Medical Journal* says: “Jaenicke finds that a decoction of birch-leaves in the proportion of a heaped teaspoonful to two hundred and fifty cubic centimetres of boiling water, boiled together for five to ten minutes, and taken in doses of two cupfuls *per diem*, to be an effective remedy for renal calculi. At first calculi the size of a pea were discharged, later the concretion was passed in the form of coarse sand.”

NERVE-BLOCKING TO PREVENT SHOCK FROM AMPUTATION.—Dr. Hermann B. Gessner describes in *American Medicine* two cases in which the shock following amputation of the thigh was prevented by injecting cocaine into the large nerve-trunks before dividing them. About one grain in solution was used.